2; Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

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rupees. Nowadays who can say whether they take them to the courts or not? Besides this we have a couple of shameful sins that are not publicly mentioned.

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When anyone has caused any loss, we make them pay the price or the estimated damage, and we also fine them. We fine both who strike each other, when both are guilty, otherwise one of them. If bullocks or cows butt and kill each other, we take the one who caused the death; and if anyone kills a bullock by ploughing or beating it, we make him pay its price. Anyone who falsely complains or makes a claim, him we punish contrarily. Those who without cause backbite people, we fine heavily.

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A girl who commits the fault of mounting a tree in the sacred grove, or of entering the sacred closet in a man's house, will have to give a sacrifice animal.

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When there is a dispute in connexion with the boundaries, the Pargana and the village headmen of the neighbourhood come together and settle the matter; and when there is a dispute in connexion with riceland, the village headman and the village council settle the matter. They fine the guilty person. These two kinds of mutual robbing have spread over the whole country through the instigation of the Dekos; otherwise formerly we had no such quarrels. Nowadays the Dekos also rob us of our villages; they both encroach on our boundaries and steal our riceland. People say: The Dekos enter like a needle, and they swell to be as large as a plough-share. They are also making us rob each other and quarrel. Where they are, there is no peace. Causing false evidence to be given in the courts, they rob us of all we have; and the magistrates do not understand our language; therefore we shall probably some day in the future again have to run away somewhere. If Deko cats were not living among Santals, it would be good for us Santals.

3t Mukherjee O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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Conclusion

614 [27] In concluding the review of the Santal clans and sub-clans as investigated by us in Mayurbhánj, we should note that quite a number of Santal sub-clans have been unearthed by Dr. Campbell, and we have taken the liberty to incorporate his list in the Appendix along with those of Risley, as found in his *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*. An elaborate discussion of these sub-clans may form the work of a lifetime and we trust earnest students will take up this exploration.

Secondly, it may be generally observed that the sub-clans of the parent clan can marry into the other sub-clans, provided they have not the same totem. Thus a Nij-Tuḍu can marry a Lat' Tuḍu, unless of course there are other local bars, of which sometimes there is no end. It goes without saying that marriage outside the clan proper is, the most welcome, but regard must be had to some traditional enmities as between the Besras and the Tuḍus, Kiskus vs. Mārṇḍis, and Santalia is replete with tales and legends of lads and lasses of such Capulets and Montagues creating a zig-saw puzzle for their parents and the clans in general.

614 688 627 Thirdly, offences against the food-taboos of the clans and sub-clans are tried by the members constituting it. Thus if a Nij-Hansdak' eats a Raj-hans, their totem, there is bound to be a gathering of all

Jt Mukherjea O, Y-4,6 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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Nij-Hansdak's along with a Ṭikà Murmu, (the Santal equivalent for a Brahmin for such purposes), for ceremonial expiation of the erring soul. It is on payment of Rs. 1-4as., a cup of bell-metal and a napkin (to be received by the Ṭikà Murmu) that he can be restored to his clan. 614 688 627

Fourthly, we should note that Santals, although divided into so many clans and sub-clans, do not observe any caste-system as the Hindus. Although the *Murmus* are called *Ṭhàkurs* and are generally selected as priests of the tribe (in preference to others), they dine with any one within the tribal fold and marry anywhere within the permitted grades. But it is not the custom of the Santal to take rice or water from the *Dekos* (non-Santals). Although in course of time, some clans claim some superiority over others, no rigours of castes are noticeable. But as we have observed before, the same does not hold good with regard to non-Santals. Santal boys and girls, after their marriage, are prohibited by strict regulation from dining with the Dekos excepting the Kuṛmbis, Hos and Bhumij. Thus they maintain, by means of a rigorous taboo, their purity from defilement. 614 564 [793] [784]

In conclusion, we should note that we questioned the Santals of the Santal Paraganas regarding marriage within the clan (viz. including all the various sub-clans). The educated Santals said that 614

3t Mukherjea O, Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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623 without them are unthinkable to the Santal.
622 Similarly, when a man wants to accept a "ghàrdi
[606] jamwanc" (domesticated son-in-law, if such a term is permissible), he calls in the village-assembly and informs them orally about his intention.

623 Besides, the Headman deals with breaches of all
627 social taboos by the Santals under his jurisdiction.
692 Thus, a woman getting upon a thatch, or taking
688 to the plough, a man sprinkling water on his elder sister-in-law on the conclusion of the flower-festival or a woman on her husband's elder brother and *vice versa*, are called upon by the Headman and his jury to answer the serious charges, thought to affect the well-being of the tribe and receive their proper share of punishment and a ceremonial purification before restoration to the tribal fold. There are various ways of such expiation as we shall see later on in course of this chapter; elaborate processes being gone through to cleanse the erring member
622 from his or her sin. The Headman and his council
623 are also the custodians of Santal customary laws in
692 the first instance, only they lack jurisdiction to try offences against the tribal totems. They have seisin even over crimes against the marriage law or forbidden degrees in sexual congress, if they are of a lighter nature, the natural venue of such trials being the higher courts as we shall soon see.

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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arises ; and those days are no more when it was a regular feature of Santal life with the mass dancing and drinking associated with its conclusion. So it is that the Santals of Mayurbhanj have got a second string to their bow, in the form of a parliament during *Sakrat baske*, (*Mòkòrbasi*, on the second of Magh) in case the hunting assembly may not be convened for want of sufficient attraction.

692 634 [224] [184] [178]

Supreme council at Mòkòrbasi

This parliament of the *Desh-Pròdhans* is held at some halting place (*gadi* or *mukam*) towards the river Damodar to which the Santals journey to throw the bones of their dead relations in the holy river. Here it is that the people aggrieved by the decision of the *Desh-Pròdhans* appeal to the assembly of elders to reopen their cases and try them according to law. Frequently, these appeals are admitted and tried by the assembly of all the *Desh-Pròdhans* of the tribe in consultation with the elders. But here also only important questions relating to the payment of bride-price or restriction of conjugal rights form the subject-matter of the decisions of the supreme court.

[764]

Social taboos: Punishment for their breaches

While dealing with the village assembly and its powers and functions, we have observed that as

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3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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688 regards the breach of social taboos, there are various
783 methods of ceremonial purification. Thus the woman who gets upon a thatch must undergo penance by passing under it, while a mixture of cow-dung in water is poured above the thatch.

If they take rice from *Hadis*, Weavers, *Ghasis*, *Doms* and such lower caste Hindus, they have to undergo a penance, being summoned by the village Headman and the "Mòṇṛèn hòṛ".

[305] The *modus operandi* of the purification requires the offender to go to *jòl-ghàt* (bathing ghat) where a Santal barber shaves him on receipt of Re 1-4 ans., as his fee, together with a piece of cloth and a bowl. Next, he is taken to the water and forced to take a ceremonial ablution. The village elders now sink
[824] a twig of a Pipal (Santali, *Hesak'*, a species of fig, *Ficus Religiosa*, Willd) tree on the mud near the bank ; the barber takes the offender out of the water, while the elders shout *haribol* thrice. Thereafter, water made holy with the touch of *tulsi* leaves, is sprinkled over the delinquent ; and he is tied by the hand to the *Pipal* branch sevenfold by means of a string, amidst a second shout of *haribol*. Now they extricate him out of the knots and give him a brass-coin, a leaf of a *tulsi* plant and some cow-dung to eat, and later take him to the end of the village where the gods *Jahèr era*, Mòṇṛenko, *Atupat* and *Pirpat* are ceremonially worshipped.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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The offender also offers *pujas* to his own god by sacrificing a fowl. Finally, he is taken back to his tribal fold after entertaining the Headman and the village elders at a feast.

Santal tribal customs prescribe various measures of such purification, and considering their magnitude, they deserve separate treatment in another publication. They have even penances for a man attacked with leprosy. Our scope forbids us to enter into the plethora of these tribal taboos. But we should deal in detail with the tribal purification known as *Bitlahà* that follows a marriage or union within the clan or with non-Santals.

"*Bitlahà*" *in the Santal Parganas*[1]

In recent times, a very curious form of social ostracism named *Bitlahà* prevailing among the Santals of Santal Parganas came to public notice with some of its disturbing repercussions on public peace and tranquillity. This is a tribal purification of those who break the Santal marriage-laws, and a discussion on its nature and significance may prove interesting.

1. This is quoted from the author's article on "*Bitlaha*" or "Santal Social Ostracism," published in the Mayurbhanj Chronicle.